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ABSTRACT

This description of the content and structure of a 10-year Icelandic Social Science Curriculum Project serves as a commentary on the role of the project in the context of Icelandic curriculum reform. A discussion of the place of structural developmental curricula in the reform dynamics of educational progressivism precede the specifics of the Icelandic reform context. The description of the special features of the project includes its role in the production of concepts, instructional materials, and teacher materials representing the integration of knowledge about man, society, and the ecological conditions of man's life on earth--a representation systematically built from a wide variety of social science disciplines using the inductive processes and discovery approaches as specified by developmental didactics. Next is a discussion of factors contributing to the defeat of the project; a defeat triggered by an onslaught of neo-fundamental ideologies in which perspectivism and socio-moral understanding were defamed as indoctrination and the goal of developmental education was replaced by the "Back to Basics" movement. Experiences gained and motives operating during two decades of Icelandic educational reform are then discussed and reasons for the vulnerability of rational and rationalist reforms are examined. Tables and appendices include (1) an overview of the project's K-9 social studies course; (2) a structural matrix of key concepts; (3) examples of the linkage of key concepts and content in a widening spiral framework; (4) a presentation of a unit; and (5) examples of second and third grade task structures, organization of tasks, and objectives. (LH)

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The Rise and Fall of the Social Science Curriculum Project in Iceland, 1974-84: Reflections on Reason and Power in Educational Progress

Aufstieg und Fall des Projektes Sozialwissenschaft für die Schule in Island 1974-84: Zur Rolle von Vernunft und Macht in der Schulreform

Summary

The emergence of structural and developmental curricula from the reform context of the sixties and seventies and the subsequent neofundamentalist attacks on them are discussed. The Icelandic reform context represents a case of integrated organizational and instructional change. The Social Science Curriculum Project occupies a rather prominent place in that context. Major features of the curriculum program are described. Recent attacks on the project are analyzed and a number of reasons for the vulnerability of rationalist reform orientations are explored.

Zusammenfassung

In den sechziger Jahren ist eine Anzahl entwicklungsorientierter Curricula entstanden, die sich sowohl für die zugrundegelegten Lernprozesse als auch für die Repräsentation der Lerninhalte auf das Strukturkonzept berufen. Das in Island entwickelte Programm "Sozialwissenschaft für die Schule" gehört hierzu. Die Stellung dieser Curricula in der Bildungsreform der sechziger und siebziger Jahre und die in konservativer Einstellung erfolgenden Angriffe in den achtziger Jahren werden diskutiert. Die Schulreform in Island liefert ein Beispiel für den geplanten Wandel von Organisationsstrukturen und Unterrichtsprozessen. Das Projekt Sozialwissenschaft für die Schule spielt eine Schlüsselrolle in dieser Reform. Wichtige Dimensionen des Projekts werden beschrieben. Es folgt eine Darstellung der öffentlichen Auseinandersetzungen um das Projekt und schließlich eine Einschätzung der Gründe für die Verletzlichkeit von Reformen, die sich auf rationalistische Legitimierungen berufen.

Introduction

At the outset, a few words are in order about what this paper is, and what it is not going to cover. Due to limitations in space I cannot give an extensive description of the content and structure of the Icelandic Social Science Curriculum project. I shall, however, comment on the role of the project in the context of Icelandic curriculum reform and the function of that reform in the total reform process. Moreover, I shall focus on some of the general features of that reform that speak for at least some generalizability of the Icelandic case across political contexts in Western societies in recent times.

In view of constraints on time and space, even this reconstruction will have to be brief, essayistic and tentative. The presentation will start with a section that defines the place of structural developmental curricula in the reform dynamics of educational progressivism and the onslaught of neo-fundamentalist ideologies. It will proceed, second, with a description of the Icelandic reform context - as a special case of tying together macro- or organizational and micro- or processual and instructional issues of educational change. Third is a description of the special features of the Social Science Curriculum project. Fourth, I shall describe the rather violent, if provisional, end of the project. Finally, I shall briefly explore some of the inner reasons for the vulnerability of rational and rationalist reforms.

I

Among his fascinating and insightful "Essays in Autobiography", J. Bruner (1984) has a chapter called "The new curriculum". In this chapter, Bruner tells the story how right-wing activists brought down his inspired curriculum project "Man: A course of study". A telling episode recounts a talk show in Phoenix, Arizona, where Peter Dow, Jerry's man in MACOS, confronts two virtuous textbook

watchers. The moderator - Logan Stuart - asks Dow, and I quote: "whether he was not worried lest exposure to other values might alter children's values. Dow replied that this was anything but obvious. Stuart blurted out, 'What I am trying to extract from you is an admission that the most important thing to teach a child is faith'! Dow replied that in his view the purpose of schooling was 'to cultivate doubt, to raise questions, to help the child see the world from another point of view'". And Bruner concludes: "That was how it ended, how it always ended".

The difference between Stuart and Dow is, in a nutshell, what the curriculum conflict is about: Centration versus decentering. The din of the battle is heard throughout the Western world. I hope to be able to make clearer at least some of the implications and consequences of that conflict in the course of this exposition.

My paper, in many respects, is but a long footnote to Jerome Bruner's poignant account of the rise and fall of MACOS, and, in its guise, of the New Curriculum. It is an account of the vane of one of the hopes of the post-World War II era. However, the esoteric Icelandic example should add a touch of universality to Bruner's local American version of a basic script. The story, in essence, records that the curriculum issue is being resolved, before our eyes, and contrary to the best interest of children, in something like a religious war. Bruner has described the drama from the personal perspective of one of the main figures. But being the central character of the cast, he may not have told us enough about the significance of the message, the wider context of his curriculum discovery, and the implications of the conservative revolt against it. Yet, like Cassandra, we should at least understand the reasons for the destruction of Troy, even if we cannot prevent its fall. In spite of Ben

Brodinsky's informative account of the New Right - the movement and its impact (Phi Delta Kappan, October 1982), we know too little about the motives, validity claims and implications of the New Right's attack on the New Curriculum. Bruner's critique of New Right anti-intellectualism, primitive patriotism, and "back to basics" - these are his terms - calls for further efforts to reveal its deep structure. We mostly fail, I think, to grasp the deeper reasons for the war on the rationalism, structuralism and intuitionism of the new instructional agenda. We have not sufficiently pondered why the fundamentalist old and an intellectual New Right is conducting civil war against the Cartesian and the Keynesian reformers internationally. There is too little analysis of the weaknesses of the progressive case from a progressive perspective. We need deeper knowledge of the reasons lest the case be lost for deeper reasons than those invoked by Bruner.

We may be convinced of the excellence of the new structural curricula. They may be the best that ever entered the schools. But best for whom? We may believe that our justifications of instructional and organizational reform are valid: competence (or cognitive growth) and compassion (or developmental opportunities for the socially handicapped). But valid for whom? Until recently we surmised that attention to equality and excellence represent shared meaning in educational discourse. But what we experience in today's debates is the loss of this basic consensus. The new alliance against progress systematically confuses the symptoms of societal modernization with the consequences of progress in education. The New Right attributes the responsibility for the problems of children and adolescents under industrialism (which they cherish) to the progressives (whom they hate); the reformers refuse responsibility for the unanticipated consequences of reform. It is imperative to disentangle the secular effects of the transition to post-traditional society on childhood and

adolescence from the direct effects of educational reform - whether positive or negative. The developmental sciences need to be informed of socio-historic contexts and shed their ignorance of the dynamics of the social system in which reform is caught. In Weber's terms, political action (and educational reform is political action) requires working on hardwood with patience and a sense of proportion. We have been too far from heeding Weber's wisdom.

The school reform debate in the fifties was neither cognitive nor curricular. It was organizational and instructional. What reformers were worried about were the hard-core problems of schooling: Cooling-out processes operating on common man boys, the selection procedures built into the organization of instruction (cf. Halsey, Floud & Anderson, 1961). Benjamin Bloom and John Carroll were looking into the routines of classroom practice and working on more effective procedures for learning and teaching. Their tack was better analysis of what pupils and teachers were diffusely heading for. The "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives" (Bloom et al., 1956; Krathwohl et al., 1964) and the mastery learning paradigm (Block, 1971; Carroll, 1963) were powerful attempts to change the predicament of common man boys in the schools. This was a vigorous attack on the time-hallowed core of school organization, the distribution of time among learners. The implementation of instructional objectives called for a reliable technology of teaching. But it never occurred to the Chicago group that the school factory might not be grinding out what it should - if only production processes were organized to mastery.

When the curriculum issue emerged in the late fifties, the question was neither cognition nor the injuries of class. The scientists got involved, because they wanted science for America, proficiency in an international HOM competition. Sputnik had made them aware of outcome deficits, rather than processes, of

schooling. They really were cognitive conservatives. Teachers, to them, were dissemination machines. In order to shortcut presumed low competence instruction they proposed teacher-proof science packages. Curriculum for them was organized content rather than organizing process.

On the other hand, the emergent cognitive camp with its new look professed no particular educational involvement. The cognitivists were busily reforming psychology's paradigms rather than schools. Despite Piaget and a cognitive tradition of child psychology there was little thought about child development in the early years of cognitive science and even less about an applied developmental science of education. That was for later. It was political crisis —America's failure to antedate Sputnik— that sensitized scientists and cognitivists alike to the role of education for the nation's welfare: Only then curriculum, instruction and learning suddenly became a top-ranking concern. Cartesians and Keynesians unexpectedly found common ground - the school. It is the time of high-powered conferences where scientists and mathematicians, cognitive psychologists, educators and scholars united in an unprecedented effort to give new shape to the process of education.

Since the heyday of curriculum theorizing with its rationalist fervor, since the Woods Hole Conference and the Washington Conference on Learning a quarter of a century ago, the zeal has paled. But the encounter of cognitive psychology and curriculum-minded scientists had sparked off a new quality in educational discourse. The relation of cognition to culture, of learning to life, quite suddenly had come into a novel focus. What emerged from the cognitive curriculum debate was the idea of education as an evolutionary project: something the species had developed to monitor its own evolution. While the debate had originally focused on local deficits in scientific knowledge, it triggered an

insight that transcended the local perspective: It was the insight that individual and collective cognitive competence play a central role in the evolution of society, even of the species. That insight would logically lead to a reassessment of the place of education. Since education, in this view, plays an important role in the acquisition and framing of cognitive competence, the process of education occupies a historically unique role in the evolution of society. Thus the interaction of teacher and learner comes to be placed at the heart of an all-important co-developmental activity, while the object of their transactions, thecurriculum, is invested with an importance that is deeply different from, and far transcends the value conventionally attributed to school knowledge. Because the new perspective links the ontogenetic process of knowledge acquisition to a theory of mind, and learning to evolution, the "objects" of learning are seen as the subject matter of cultural experience, the substance operated on by the cognitive process that transforms experience into Mind.

This definition has a curiously contradictory effect: Curriculum becomes both all-important (as process) and contingent (as product). What is central is the structure. Content is peripheral, accessory, and ephemeral. Since the functioning of the process depends on the subject's developmentally structured activity , a developmentally insightful theory of instruction is required no less than developmentally sensitive curricula. A new and powerful conceptualization of the educational process emerges, linking the rational and structural properties of mind to the organismic metaphor of growth in the transactional context of culture - the generative matrix of experience.

This is a conceptualization replacing, as it were, product by process, indoctrination by inquiry, dogma by doubt. In short, it represents an

evolutionary leap in our ability to think about education, to grasp its potential reality: It replaces canonized knowledge by knowledge construction. And by freeing the subject to engage in the discovery of meaning and in the experience of truth, it implicitly tends to subvert the power of tradition, to delete the stamp of mere collective opinion, or faith, on the individual mind. But by the same token, the door is surreptiously being opened for the return of the repressed, for the vigilants to enter. Among the progressives nobody seemed to notice. For all its insights, there is a certain sociological naiveté about the cognitivist focus on individual construction. And the contempt of content has proved to be a weakness with bitter consequences. But hindsight is easy. In the early sixties curriculum theory was discovering Piaget, the cognitive emancipation of individual development from the constraints of an obsolete organization of school knowledge and school learning. It was oblivious, however, of Durkheim, Weber and Marx, of the collectively imposed constraints on learning in schools. No wonder then that the reformers would forget the dialectics of enlightenment, the contributions they themselves might be making to the constraints that would bring them down when the tide changed.

With an evolutionary analysis of the process of education, with a structural concept of the curriculum and a constructivist theory of instruction the time was ripe, finally, to catch up with the Keynesians and provide viable substance to what schools should be doing. Competence theory was ready to meet the functionalists in search of the conditions of economic growth, of the manpower requirements of social and economic progress. It was the functionalists who had been analyzing the dark side of education: the predicament of lower-class children, the organization of school failure, the cooling-out function, the biased distribution of success. Now the stucturalists pretended to possess a previously unknown remedy. They were entering a new variable in the equation -

the variable of development. Once developmental didactics would have superseded the mechanistic organization of content indoctrination, that equation would no longer specify the outcome conditions of educational failure, but those of educational progress. Perhaps this sounds a bit Pollyannish. But remember, these were optimistic years, after Korea, before Vietnam. For some years educational reform appeared to open the gate for the resolution of many ills. On a global scale it seemed to offer an answer to the ubiquitous problem of inequality, an answer that optimistically offered to make revolution obsolete. OECD's "Targets for Education" were formulated in a famous Washington conference in the very same year as Bruner's "Process of Education" emerged from the discussions of the Woods Hole conference on Cape Cod!

Those were indeed optimistic times. The times for a coalition between the international technocrats of OECD, the national reformers, and educators in the schools. Times for Power and Reason to enter an alliance for progress. We have traveled a long way since 1960. Already in 1971, in his introduction to "The Relevance of Education", Jerome Bruner strikes a pessimistic note. Power and Reason have divorced. None of those in power today share Kennedy's or Johnson's predilection for the rational thrust of education towards growth. There are clear preferences for the computer rather than competence theory in the classroom. Afflicted by the symptoms of secular change that requires evolutionary solutions to present dilemmas, many wish to turn back the clock. While to survive tomorrow's problems people need critical knowledge about self, society and ecology, the path is set back to basics, back to non-critical knowledge for a premodern mind.

In the mid-sixties, the reform debate heard throughout major parts of Europe and America began to be felt in Iceland. Icelanders had been relatively satisfied with the state of their educational system. Centuries of complete literacy had eased Iceland's rather sudden transition into cultural modernity. Universal literacy had originally been brought about in the 18th century by an effective strategy of alphabetisation without schools: The Danish colonial administration, guided by pietistic principles of education for salvation, would allow only literate farmhands on illiterate farms, to ensure bible reading and teaching (Guttormsson, 1981). Almost without schools Icelanders had been educated, and quite well educated it seems, until about the turn of the 20th century. In 1904, the first school legislation was passed, establishing public compulsory education for a few primary school years - a minimum of four at first, gradually increased to 6, 7, and later 8 years.

It was only in 1946, in the aftermath of war and almost torrential modernization and industrialization of the economy that a quasi-natural process of growth in educational institutions was channeled into legislation designed to institute an educational system to service a modern society. Thus, the 1946 legislation was the first to formulate goals for the system and thereby signal awareness of the existence of socio-educational problems: It stipulated the provision of equal educational opportunity for all, and in particular, equality of access to secondary education that was to be based on merit as justified by examined achievement alone (Magnúss, 1946). The ubiquitous problems due to division of labor and the effects of stratification on individual biographies had not spared Iceland. But while the 1946 legislation was the first to define an "educational system" proper, including elements of central educational administration, inner processes continued to be taken for granted. Curriculum and instruction remained largely unspecified and their substance was mostly left to tradition in the form

of available school books and rote learning.

The stage, however, is set for our story. We have a foreboding of the intensive transformation process brought to bear on the educational system exactly 20 years later: A growing population involved in a process of rapid industrialization and, most of all, urbanization, with both regional and social mobility eliminating, with high rates of change, the traditional ways of life in stable stray settlement forms of family based subsistence farming and psychological self-reliance. In sum, what characterizes the scene is detraditionalization, transforming the deep structure of childhood and adolescence. A basically new psycho-social structure is being established, leaving behind the social and literary heritage, the world views of stray settlement farming, with its transparency and its functional order (Edelstein, 1971, 1983).

It took just two decades for the process to reach administrative consciousness. By the mid sixties, the great educational debate had swept the West, providing a number of seemingly convergent formulae for educational action. There was the classical functionalist formula stressing the role of school organization for equality of educational opportunity, (the British, Swedish, American insistence on comprehensive education). There was the new OECD insistence on the economics of education, the Third Factor theory, stressing the role of highly qualified manpower (HQM) in economic growth. There was the promise of behavioral objectives: the design of functionally adequate and effective instruction - not least to the benefit of the disadvantaged.

The conflation of these formulae — and what insights they represented — was to determine the great school reform debate of the late sixties. They became the

base for policy-making, planning and administrative action. But, beyond this foundational set of arguments the reform debate was increasingly informed by two truly new and mindboggling contributions that promised to provide a new dimension to questions of school organization, highly qualified manpower and the objectives of learning. I am referring to cognitivism - the turn to mind; and sociolinguistics , the cultural meaning of class. Bruner and Bernstein provided new substance to the educational process: Cognitivism set the stage for a new structural curriculum theory; sociolinguistics introduced the notion of educational compensation for socially induced deprivation.

These theories had fascinating properties. They relieved the reformers of the need to appeal to ideals of justice and fairness to guide the reform. Since research had discovered the growth of competence to be self-generated in the developing mind and in the structure of language as long as it was free to unfold according to its nature, reform was merely to pave the way for the naturally rational process of development to take its proper course, uninhibited by detrimental social organization or practice. Reform was to design settings and methods by which to compensate the inequality of social performance condition by educational means. From the natural rationality of development, the reform drew its normative orientation: It was child-directed, equalitarian and liberal. It was rationalist, structuralist and universalist. Its mood was optimistic. Instead of insistence on the tantamount importance of organizational change — the prevailing reform mode — it provided new saliency to inner reform, to the instructional transactions in the school. A new role for pedagogy - enlightened by sociology and psychology.

Emergent educational reform planning in Iceland in the mid sixties responded to a threefold challenge produced by recent social developments in many modern

societies (Edelstein, 1971): First, the pragmatic challenge of improving obsolete administrative techniques in the face of the growing complexity of the educational enterprise. Second, the challenge of social change. This implies a gradually changing awareness of the general objectives of educational administration and planning. Third, in the wake of the previous two, is the challenge of a categorical, and semi-moral, imperative of educational change. Due to its technical nature, the new source of legitimacy cannot easily be controlled by the traditional holders of office. Imperceptibly, a process of declassement is initiated - a loss of traditional power and security to the new rationality of intentional change.

At the beginning, nobody was aware of inner contradictions generated by the reform process. Nor would anyone anticipate that dissatisfactions so generated might later corroborate the case of counterreform. Even when they were aware of these contradictions the reformers optimistically believed in the persuasiveness and irreversibility of rationally achieved progress. That has proved a fateful flaw in the reform discourse. Rancour against "educational experts" appears to be widespread among the New Right on both sides of the ocean.

Once rational process had been established in the form of an R & D outfit in the Ministry of Education (1966) to attend to the planning and implementation of innovation in the Icelandic school system, nothing cast a shadow over an enterprise of optimism except the dearth of experts, the painful scarcity of qualified manpower for the task. It soon became obvious that curriculum would have to be the prime focus of change, and curriculum reconstruction certainly was a most resource-consuming and manpower-intensive process, as was well known from Swedish and American experience. But it was also quite clear that, in Iceland at least, none of the "Keynesian" objectives among educational policy

targets—manpower for economic growth, redistribution of educational opportunity etc.—could be attained without changing the inner features of schooling: the syllabus, the curriculum, the strategies of instruction and evaluation. The most salient reason being the widely acknowledged obsolescence of prevailing curricula and textbooks.

Obsolescence referred, most critically, to science, and science was the hallmark of modernity. There was an awareness in the public at large of a gross and general undersophistication in the sciences. Without science, no HQM, no manpower planning, no economic growth. Sputnik, in Iceland, did not have to appeal to military reasoning. So curriculum reform, however different from the US, started with science. In the fall of 1967 it was decided to head for a first attempt. Physics was selected as a forerunner subject. Beyond the reasons outlined above, a number of specific arguments carried weight (see Edelstein, 1975):

a) Physics was considered by experts to be a highly structured discipline, whose modern structure stood out sharply against obsolete former states. This reason refers to the structure of the discipline that made it amenable to change.

b) The subject was represented, at university and pre-university level, by young and active scientists who were interested in the build-up of a school discipline leading to scientific sophistication. This reason is rooted in the emerging social system of natural science in Iceland that provided interested professionals for the reform.

c) School people tended to agree that the then eight-year compulsory school needed to critically reflect on time-honored traditions of elementary schooling

that placed high priority on reading skills and literacy and devote more time to science education than hitherto. This reason relates to the internal organization of education and calls for the introduction of science earlier than stipulated by tradition, especially of secondary education.

All of these reasons appealed to a background consensus. The following elements of this consensus warrant mentioning: The tradition of substantive universal literacy in the nation had generated a positive general attitude towards education, even relatively "long" education for all. Good education was a sign of self respect (publicly accepted), independent of class. This attitude reinforced the child-oriented values typical of Iceland, a country that had maintained high fertility rates even when medical progress had all but ended infant mortality (mean number of children per familiy in the mid-sixties: 3.61). (Edelstein, Björnsson, & Kreppner, 1977). This set of values led to the political acceptance of child-oriented policies and expenditures of which expansion and improvement of education seemed just one facet. It was not the time for reservations about the wisdom of educational expenditures. As part of ubiquitously accepted welfare expenditures they enjoyed universal support.

Education, somehow, was part and parcel of national identity. It enjoyed historical repute and social affirmation. The situation made it a focus of widely shared interest. By the same token, teachers collectively enjoyed high and increasing status. And their adoption of school reform would even enhance their collective status. So to popular consensus was added professional allegiance.

In 1967, there seemed to be genuine interest in reform throughout the educational profession. This interest was enhanced by systematically involving

teachers, and in particular the activists among them, in the reform. Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives served a crucial function in raising professional conscience about education processes in the educational community. It helped involving teachers in the reform. It spread knowledge about largely unwitting patterns of instruction among large groups of potential change agents. These were invited by the Ministry, in conjunction with the Headmasters Association, to debate the state of the schools and avenues to change. The Taxonomy proved a powerful instrument of enlightenment producing a qualitative leap in educators' understanding of the workings of curriculum and instruction. And understanding worked wonders for the alignment of the profession with the cause of reform.

Reasons residing within the structure of the discipline, its social background, the need pattern and the new awareness of needs for change in the schools thus contributed to a propitious start of a curriculum innovation enterprise that appeared to be able to enlist the support of a number of forces necessary for success.

I cannot here describe the details of planning, implementation and dissemination of the new curriculum. It was a highly rational procedure of building a participatory model of curriculum construction , both central and peripheral, to use the technical terms known from curriculum engineering (Becher & Maclure, 1978; Stenhouse, 1975). The involvement of central authorities was obvious in a centralized system. But beyond central involvement a model that was both participatory and peripheral was a necessity: Since neither curriculum construction experts nor educational service professionals, nor even educational psychologists were available in the nation, the process had to be based on the activity of practising teachers. As curriculum planners, textbook and materials

writers, teacher trainers, master teachers and disseminators, teachers were both generally and technically the agents of change.

We have to shortcut the interesting linkage between the curriculum development enterprise and the internal development of the Ministry of Education, in particular its R & D department; the growth of teacher sophistication through changes in basic training and the massive expansion of inservice training; the development of new and encompassing school legislation; the development of a national agency for the production of educational media. The whole unfolding educational scene thrived, as it were, on the spin-off of the curriculum construction activity. In some ways it was a budding educational academy whose members were passionately interested and experienced practicians of education.

After the Physics plan had been accepted and its implementation had proved feasible, it was decided that the R & D department should devote most of its time and resources to the revision of the total curriculum of the compulsory school -- grades 1 through 8 (or 9, according to anticipated expansion of the school system). Adopting and modifying, where necessary, the format successfully used by Physics, curriculum commissions were established for all the remaining fields of study during the following years. These commissions drew up plans for the implementation of change on the basis of which coordinating committees or curriculum teams were constituted, and, somewhat later in the process, inspectors were hired to head the ongoing activities. A master plan for the curriculum innovation including up to 15 subject areas was set up in 1970, which became the general frame or design of the Ministry's qualitative planning effort for the entire school system.

The pragmatist synthesis of developmental cognitivism, deprivation theory and a

technology of taxonomic analysis became a major source of sophistication for those involved in the curriculum-building process. Under its sway, curriculum planning developed in new and important directions. The main modification in the conceptual structure of curriculum planning implies a shift from curriculum innovation conceived of as a mere modernization enterprise towards a concept of curriculum construction as an 'intelligence-building' enterprise . A boot-strapping process gradually produced a more sensible fit between theory and curriculum practice. Under the influence of the experience gained on the very job of curriculum-making in the innovation project itself, the influence of cognitive theory grew. As the innovation process opened up for the influence of theory, classroom experience, learning tasks and teaching/learning transactions came to be increasingly evaluated in constructivist terms. Correspondingly, the setting of goals for curriculum planning and implementation increasingly focused on the instructional process itself.

The triangular interaction between teacher, learner and topic became the focus of planning for a mind-building, meaning-making enterprise. The development of the learner, the maeutic strategies of the teacher, the structure of the subject matter yield decisive parameters for a wholistic conception of curriculum building. Piaget, Bruner, and Kohlberg each contribute their central theorems to an eclectic curricular developmental constructivism. Development is indeed the aim of education. The helpful model provided by the unforgotten Hilda Taba guided the curriculum work to attend to each instructional sequence to each and any transaction as a setting for micro-developmental progress. Taba more than anybody taught us that every single move in the teacher-learner transaction matters, once it is placed in a developmental context. But now I am already speaking in the context of the Social Science Curriculum Project.

When new encompassing school legislation was enacted in 1974, the optimistic outlook was that by the mid eighties or so, the total curriculum of the by then nine years compulsory school would be new curriculum, would be process curriculum. The orientation as well as basic mechanisms for reform were written into the law, a document of compassionate enlightenment. Today, a decade later, strident voices clamor for abrogation of major stipulations of the law. (cf. Eliasson, 1984).

III

The turn to cognitivism and pragmatism began to have an influence on curriculum development in Iceland around 1970. It was linked, although not limited, to the Social Science Curriculum Project. Around 1970, a commission had been appointed to investigate history, geography including local studies, and civics. Procedurally, the process of curriculum planning in a particular field always started with the appointment of a committee to investigate the state of a discipline in the Icelandic schools and to develop proposals for improvements. The Social Studies Commission departed from the usual type of recommendation mostly aimed at updating and modernizing a traditional discipline. It advised integrating and restructuring the disciplines involved in a type of discipline not hitherto established in Icelandic schools (Ministry of Education, 1971). That was how the Social Science Curriculum Project in Iceland came into being. After some preliminary attempts SSCP started to operate systematically in 1973.

It would take more than the space allotted to describe the project, the work processes it initiated, the products it built, and the qualitative change it attempted to instil into teacher training and other innovation projects, including the organization of textbook development. Social studies became the

most extensive project undertaken in the context of the Icelandic curriculum reconstruction enterprise. It encompassed, on the average, a group of 20 mostly parttime workers in a variety of functions. In the course of the ten years of its life, it spent roughly 700 man-months and managed to produce concepts, instructional materials of various types, teacher hand-books and A-V displays for grades K through seven, with grades five through seven still incomplete, and grades eight and nine at the blueprint stage (see Edelstein & Helgadóttir, 1981).

What the curriculum aspired to, was a multiply integrated representation of knowledge about man, society and the ecological conditions of man's life on earth. A representation more or less systematically built from material provided by the social sciences: history and archaeology, social anthropology and sociology, psychology and social psychology, geography and economics. The term "representation" needs some clarification. What it purports to convey is less a ready-made image (or structure) of man in socio-cultural context than a guide to its discovery in processes of structured inquiry - to be geared to the developmental needs and prerequisites of students. Thus, what the project tried to accomplish was unity of structure and process in the service of ever increasing decentration, cognitive growth and socio-moral sensitization, using the inductive process and discovery approaches as specified by developmental didactics. However central to the project, the latter cannot be dealt with in the present paper; (see Guidelines for Social Studies, 1977).

Let me make a few remarks, however, about what I would like to call, for want of a better term, socio-cultural constraints on developmentally oriented curricula in centralized school systems. Please remember how different such systems are from the average school system in the United States or Great Britain. These

educational cultures are used to the divergent operations and practices of a multitude of autonomous local school systems. In contradistinction, curriculum, in centralized systems, is never a local affair. Thus, social science for the schools, in the Icelandic context, could never be social studies, US fashion. To begin with, it would have to systematically incorporate both Icelandic and world history, and local and world geography - to satisfy their professional clientele, to respect their power to wield symbols and to transport memories, as well as to contribute to the sense of cultural continuity that appears to be indispensable for the affirmation of collective identity. In other words, to satisfy to some degree the requirements of a canon. The traditional localism of national history turned out to be a formidable power, even more so than the traditionally narrow professionalism of geographers. But both had to be accommodated - and it had to be done without jeopardizing the conceptual unity and the developmental design of a social science for the schools. Yet, social science could not come about as a composite of traditional school subjects. If it were to represent structured inquiry about man in natural and socio-cultural context, a conceptually valid construction was needed that was not provided by traditional school subjects. A conceptually valid construction must draw on an essential variety of contributions that open up different avenues to the study of man as a fascinating object of inquiry, empathy and moral concern. The Social Science Curriculum Project (SSCP) did not intend to offer a mirror image of academic social science in a positivist attitude. It was social science for a special educational context.

The specific educational context is the predicament of Icelandic children who have to cope with problems raised by the passing of traditional society. The curriculum was to serve the need (increasingly hard to satisfy) to understand one's own position in time and space, helping to be an insightful and autonomous

participant in the socio-political process. The passing of traditional society is making it increasingly difficult for youngsters to construct stable identities based both on shared meanings and an individual stance. An evergrowing knowledge base is needed in order to discover an orientation for the self in ever more complex social and psychological worlds; yet, no knowledge base will be sufficient once and for all. Therefore the tools of inquiry to responsibly construct, criticize and reconstruct a personal knowledge base are crucial. Since modernization has shattered the automatic devices for constructing shared meanings that traditional society provided, a tool kit for the achievement of social understanding is needed that traditional school subjects do not normally provide. The social sciences, however, can provide the fact-finding context for building decentered social understanding and rational normative orientations that a person needs as an objective foundation for subjective autonomy.

The structure of the emerging discipline was determined by three sets of imperatives that had to be heeded simultaneously. These were spelled out as content, structure and process requirements. Content requirements define a minimal common denominator in terms of traditional and recognizable history and geography information. At the same time they define a basic set of information and, when taken together, provide a sense of direction (see Table 1).

Table 1: OVERVIEW OVER 9 YEARS SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSE

GRADE ONE	HOME & SCHOOL
GRADE TWO	ENVIRONMENTS: PLAY & WORK: RURAL, VILLAGE, CITY *
GRADE THREE	SOCIETIES IN DIFFERENT ECOLOGIES
	ESKIMO: LIFE IN A COLD COUNTRY
	TANZANIA: LIFE IN A WARM COUNTRY
	ICELAND: A FISHING VILLAGE
GRADE FOUR	MAN IN NATURE & SOCIETY *
GRADE FIVE	ICELAND AND EUROPE:
	FIVE UNITS INCLUDING: POLAND; THE RHINE COUNTRIES;
	THE MEDITERRANEAN; AND SCANDINAVIA
GRADE SIX	FAMILIES & ECOLOGIES AROUND THE WORLD:
	THREE UNITS: BANGLA DESH; NIGERIA; AND PERU -
	MOUNTAIN INDIO AND CITY SLUM
	EUROPE'S DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD:
	PERU: THE SPANISH CONQUEST OF AMERICA
	USA: THE MELTING POT MODEL
GRADE SEVEN	FROM PAST POVERTY TO MODERN SOCIETY IN ICELAND
	- LIVING IN THE PAST: SOCIAL HISTORY & ECOLOGY
	- THE GREAT LAKI ERUPTIONS IN SOUTH ICELAND (1783):
	(A REGIONAL GEOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY PROJECT)
GRADE EIGHT	ICELAND AND THE WORLD IN THE 19TH CENTURY
GRADE NINE	ICELAND AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD
	ADOLESCENCE AND THE FAMILY TODAY
	THE POLITICAL & ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF ICELAND
	ONE WORLD: THE EMERGING WORLD SYSTEM AND ITS CRISES

* For details see Appendix

The structure imperative requires reconstructing social science as a consistent whole on the basis of a limited number of central and recurrent concepts and key issues. These had to allow us to organize content in view of its contribution to social understanding, its representation of the source material or subject matter and, last but not least, its educational relevance in both age-specific and general terms (see Figure 1).

The developmental (or process) imperative, while most exacting practically, proved the least difficult to attend to in theory. It came to be represented in two dimensions: Within each course, as a design of developmentally active, maximally inductive instruction. Across courses over years, as the spiral design of the total curriculum: from "simple" to "complex", from "concrete" to "abstract", from "close" to "distant", from "external-objective" to "internal-subjective", from "elemental" to "systemic", and so on (see Figure 2).

The underlying developmental dimension of growing complexity calls for increasing decentering - from descriptive to analytic modes, from reasoning in terms of co-occurrence to causality to dialectical relationships. The conceptual structure is gradually enriched by increasingly complex constructs. The scope of the subject matter widens from grade to grade: Centered on the child's own intimate world of home and school at the beginning of the course, it gradually reaches out through groups and tribes and cultures and nations and historical periods to the one world and its conflicts and the hope for intercultural solidarity based on the universality of man's predicament.

Figure 1: THE STRUCTURAL MATRIX OF KEY CONCEPTS
(SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM PROJECT)

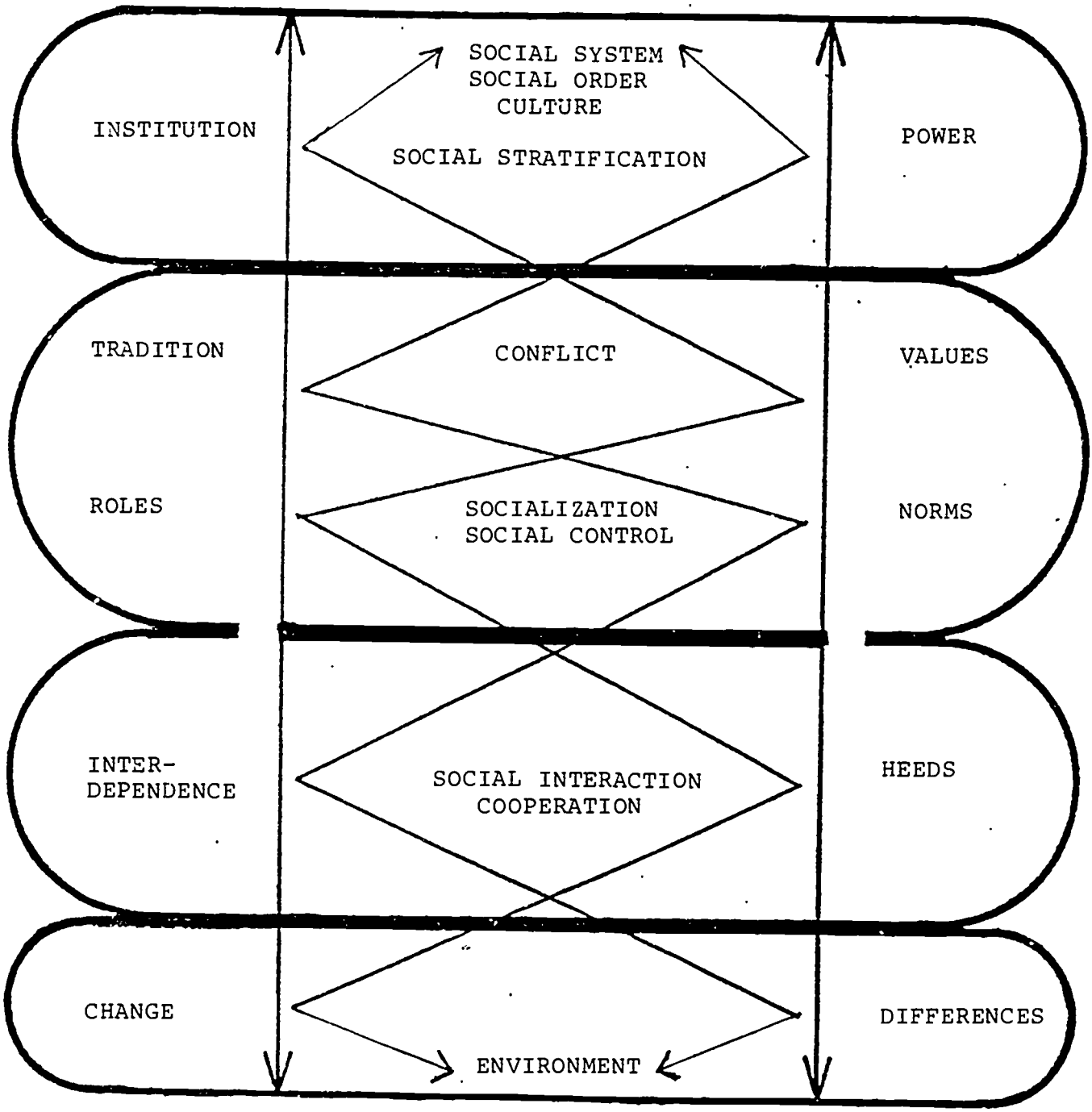
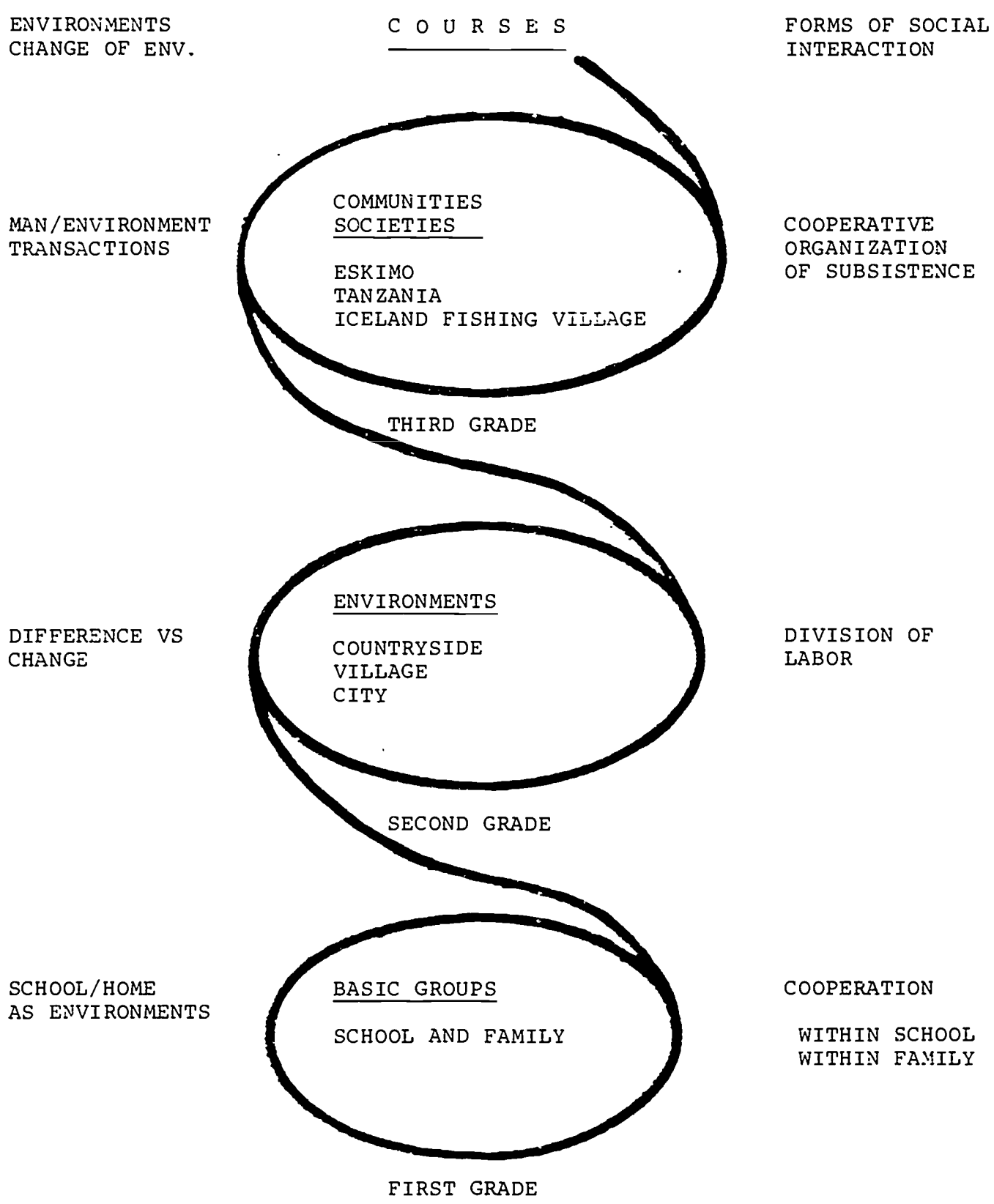


Figure 2: EXAMPLES OF LINKAGE OF KEY CONCEPTS AND CONTENT IN THE WIDENING SPIRAL



The main problem was one of selection: how to set limits to the endless wealth of relevant concepts and convincingly important topics from the various fields. Remember that, due to the need for a central curriculum—potentially available to all teachers and pupils, and thus bound to a criterion of acceptability for all—the one particular option that promised the greatest success in non-centralistic systems was not available: the single brilliant prize-winning course—à la MACOS—freely arranged by motivated teachers. SSCP had to look for the best substitute under the restrictions and constraints of centralism, cohesiveness, representativeness and limitation of choice.

All this appears well founded in principle. Directed towards social-cognitive as well as civic competence, the stance represented by SSCP can be justified developmentally, socially, and from an evolutionary standpoint. It is comprehensive, non-dogmatic, liberal and pluralistic. It neither dodges nor overstresses value issues, it espouses a universalistic perspective, thrives on discursive ethics and a constructivist conception of knowledge. In short, it is constructivist, rationalist, and intuitionist, to borrow Bruner's phrase. It is a didactic reconstruction of social science for a developmental purpose, steeped in an attitude of rationality as a universalizable claim. It aims at progressive decentering, relating cognitive and moral perspectives. And it aims at informational autonomy and responsibility, providing enough knowledge to enable students to acquire more, and want to acquire more, on their own. Its aim, in summary, is enlightened citizenship.

As the curriculum emerged, by and large it met with approval in the schools. It started bottom up, superseded the often boring textbooks that had distressed students and teachers alike. Thus, it aroused relatively little controversy. Perhaps less than the expected enthusiasm - but would teachers in a centralized

system ever be enthusiastic? What teachers would complain about was the slow rate of progress, the inservice training requirements, the heavy reading load, the unusual burden of personal involvement, the difficulties with parents who did not recognize what their children were learning, or that they were learning anything tangible at all. Remember that teachers (and parents) were socialized in the one-book and rote-memory tradition, and now had to adopt complex strategies of planning ahead for their courses, weeks or single lessons. Yet, when the storm broke out, interestingly its howl had not been preceded by the deep and unspecific grumble so often announcing dissatisfaction with and defection from a prevailing model: a grumble that often expresses the helplessness of those overtaken by a process that has been initiated without their assent.

IV

When the tempest did break out, in November 1983, after exactly ten years of existence of the Social Science Curriculum Project, the subject was history, national history above all. The time was ripe for attack. A right-of-center government had been installed a few months earlier, with the first conservative Minister of Education in office for 20 years. So there was an audience now for questions that hitherto had gone unattended. All of a sudden such questions emerged in the populist sections of the press and of Parliament: Had the Ministry of Education insouciantly let a handful of so-called ex erts surreptitiously play havoc with the national heritage - the backbone of Icelandic identity? Had a cultural revolution been engineered clandestinely to subvert the canonized tradition of history - to delete the memory of names and events that figure in the collective past? The sense of being a member of the nation seemed rooted in the memory of these figures and events of the past.

Mythical memory as it turned out, since polls showed that adolescents had little recollection of these nationally important figures and events. The amnesia, of course, cannot easily be attributed to the social science alternative to traditional history teaching, since, in fact, the social science alternative had not even been introduced to the school grades in question.

According to the critics, historical knowledge was in jeopardy because of its dissolution in the outlandish conceptual schemes of structural psychology and sociology. It was of little avail to demonstrate that, if anything, social science had helped, rather than failed, to commit to memory the historical figures whose disappearance the critics lamented (Jónsdóttir, 1984).

For months, the presumed elimination of Icelandic history from the syllabus filled the media. A plethora of articles appeared in the press, reaching from the allegation of surreptitious elimination of Icelandic history from the schools (1)—and thus from national consciousness (2)—to vicious insinuations of communist subversion (3). The issue was the topic of acrimonious debates in Parliament (4). A professor of philosophy at the University of Iceland wrote a massive populist critique of the project's universalist rationalism: The goal of education is indoctrination for the identification of pupils with their nation, while social studies was boring them to death with the plight of the Third World (5;6). Again the issue is faith versus doubt, centration versus decentering. Soon the conservative press started generalizing the attack to the developmental orientation of the reform at large. In one of the widely read newspapers an editorial appeared under the heading: "Bungling and playing" (7). The implication was that, on the authority of so-called expertise, the serious business of learning had been transformed into mere mockery, harmful to children and a blow to true education. Clearly, it was time to stop this activity,

whether it was subversive or merely stupid. At the end of the year, the powerful conservative daily "Morgunbladid" in an editorial blithely announced national consensus regained on the question (8): No more fooling around with national values. No more fooling around with education. The witch hunt had apparently led to full victory - of adult ideology over the best interest of children.

The project group was forced onto the defensive almost at once. On one side, since they were working under the auspices of the Ministry, they could not easily, without the permission of their superiors, respond to the attacks (9). For months they waited for the new conservative Minister to either extend protection to those working for the Ministry, or declare her disapproval. Meanwhile the accumulated fatigue and strain of too many years of work with too little relief and insufficient resources had left their stamp on the group. Although they fought back at last, there was little public support and little understanding of the issue at stake. With but few exceptions, teachers did not enter the debate individually, although their union in a public message came out backing the project. They remained surprisingly passive; perhaps they feared the vociferous attacks they might have to confront in the media. Had teachers sensed their professional interest more clearly, they would probably have been the only force capable of turning the tide. But the unity of the profession was no longer a given fact. The optimism of 20 years ago had been dispelled in a process of collective decline of status - a consequence of the fiscal straits of the welfare state and of growing disaffection with schools under growingly stressful conditions. Of course these conditions were part of the modernization syndrome. The reformers had provided a diagnosis and a tentative cure. Now they were accused of being responsible for the illness.

It became clear enough that the tempest against social science was aimed beyond

the social science project, the immediate target. It could be read from the Minister's words in Parliament that the whole approach to reform, the didactic strategies aimed at the activation of children in openended processes of inquiry, met with her disapproval. In a statement to Parliament she summed up her position: Knowledge is primary, she said. The teaching of facts must not be replaced by indoctrination, by the teaching of attitudes (10). But it was education for perspectivism and socio-moral understanding that was being defamed as indoctrination. The confusion of categories conveyed a clear enough message: The goal of developmental education was to be abandoned. The signs read "Back to Basics" instead.

A historian observer in a critical appraisal of what he called the "Long Nights of History Teaching in the Winter of 1983/1984" (Karlsson, 1984) sums up nicely the essence of the debate: He reports the following four positions:

1. Unsubstantiated conservatism. This includes the Minister's position. It is aimed at maintaining or reverting to past habits of teaching with no justification except that things had always been that way and that is how they should continue to be.

2. Attempts at substantiated conservatism. Only one example of this position was found among the many contributions to the debate. This case——the historian journalist's who had opened the attack——was found to be lacking both in consistency and professional stringency. (11)

3. Purposeful indoctrination. This position led, among other things, to a bill in parliament requiring the government to see to it "that instruction in Icelandic history is designed not only to increase knowledge and understanding

of the nation's history, but to establish faith in the country and its traditional cultural order". (12)

4. Finally, the position of the social science project group, oriented towards understanding the presuppositional structure of modern society, including its historical antecedents.

And in a felicitous phrase the historian extracted the gist of the criticism: An alliance against understanding. The enemies of social science in the schools, he says, may have united against it, because they objected to the educational objective of understanding. Some of the project's adversaries prefer to stockpile given facts, others want to implant given values. There may not be a major difference between them. The Minister is an illuminating example. Quite forgetful of her plea for the teaching of facts and the elimination of indoctrination she announced her support for the parliamentary motion calling for indoctrination, for the inculcation of faith in the land. She did not perceive any contradiction. To borrow Bruner's words, quoted at the outset: "This is how it ended. This is how it always ends."

V

Let us finally attempt to evaluate the experience gained (and the motives operating) in two decades of reform. What in the particular case is valid beyond the specific context? What, after decades of intervention, is the validity of the various reform positions? And what validity claims can be vindicated by the critics of reform?

Let us start with the beginning, the stark "insight" motivating the reform,

children's disaffection with learning. In the last analysis it derives, we think, from the historical divorce of school learning from experience. That divorce has to do with two simultaneous and related processes: One—functional—is the detraditionalization of knowledge, the displacement of learning away from the transparent functional context of work roles and religious beliefs in stable operatory settings. The second—formal—is the move towards abstraction, formalization and segmentation of school knowledge in the complex, opaque and bewildering totality we call modern society, where, rather than the unity of experience, the division of labor, the division of the generations, and the division of meaning systems determine children's lives (Edelstein, 1983). For various reasons organized mass learning in schools has trouble conserving the natural flavor of the quest of knowledge, the natural epistemic curiosity of the species. Children are not normally bored before they enter school, nor during the first years of schooling. The abstractness of school organization with its chunking of time, task and content, and the divorce from functional experience tend to increasingly alienate an increasing number of children, and, to put it grossly, substitute boredom for curiosity, passive submission for active inquiry in the schools.

It remains the conviction of the developmentalist reformers that the denaturation and segmentation of learning under the organizational conditions of schooling needs to be countered by a degree of "renaturalization" of the learning process, by focusing on the natural development of mind. Their strategy is to establish epistemic learning in the cultural context of schools and to provide a set of topics and objectives that is adequate for that context. They fear that without some naturalization of the learning process in the schools alienation of children and adolescents will continue and even increase, with frightening political consequences. The consequences are already visible, if one

cares to look. On the other hand, developmentalization of instruction is not enough. The developmentalist enthusiasm of the reformers probably blinded them to other necessities of reform that appeal to other traditions of expertise and to different varieties of wisdom, personological, motivational, and informational.

The counterreformers, no less than the reformers, are motivated by the symptoms of alienation in the schools. They may or may not share the reformers' analysis, but certainly they reject their remedies. If they, like the reformers, attribute the disturbing symptoms to the secular processes of modernization that affect the deep structure of children's lives and learning, they wish to turn back the clock to basics and authority. More often, however, they attribute alienation in the schools to the destruction of authority imputed to the reformers. Justifying traditional structures, they dwell less on the general predicament of children than on the happy and perhaps talented few who tend to do well within them.

On balance then, the reformers believed that a "developmental" reorganization of teaching/learning transactions is a necessary condition for recovery. But it is clearly an illusion to believe that it is sufficient. The reformers were naive on several scores: They underestimated the power of school traditions over adults' minds, the vested interest in continuity and institutional stability. They underestimated the need for the maintenance of certain basic metaphors among parents, teachers, and the public. We see more clearly today the public bewilderment at discontinuity and the loss of traditional meaning. The functional justifications of experts are of little avail against the deep need for continuity and interpretable experience. Take as example the widespread failure of OECD-sponsored introduction of set mathematics, or the failure of the elementary school reform in France. Like so many other reforms both were based

on good scientific argument. They were poorly prepared social experiments, and we have a lesson to learn from their failure.

Reformers overestimate the power of scientific argument and they certainly overestimate the scope of these arguments in relation to the validational context of day-to-day experience of education. Thus, for example, the intuitions of non-scientific school professionals about the authority needs of educational institutions provide an important validational context for the implementation of child-centered policies. These intuitions must not be ignored. They need to be incorporated in reform action.

The Icelandic reformers, by the way, were no radicals. Their professional experience of the context as practising teachers warrants their realism. They tested all proposals in detail against their intimate practical knowledge of the school's functioning and of teachers' ways of dealing with everyday problems of instruction. Yet, when the counterreformers started their campaign against what they called the radical attack on education, the public obviously was not sufficiently informed of the reform, in spite of its graduation and sustained efforts at information.

Reformers underestimate the complexity of change processes in education. The R & D & D model provides but a flawed engineering representation of the simultaneous change of organizational arrangements, transactional patterns and cognitive maps of the structure and process of schooling. The bottom-up implementation that was tried, with central support, in Iceland, has a price: the fuzziness and non-directiveness that, in spite of their benefits, go with decentral decision-making, personal persuasion and respect of local pacing. The "democratic" posture leads reformers to overestimate the degree of tolerance of

ambiguity and frustration and the amount of overwork and enthusiasm that the run-of-the-mill "fellow travellers" of reform are ready to provide, let alone the skeptics. The reformers set faith in the local structure, in the strength of professional recognition, among colleagues, of the reasonableness of their project. But they did not recognize that most colleagues are reluctant supporters at best and do not share their enthusiasm. The reformers were quite successful, but not successful enough, considering that, with the withdrawal of central support, survival would hinge on widespread and active local and individual endorsement more than on anything else. Individual endorsement, of course, is the royal road to nonviolent transformation, the road of development. But the social psychology of innovation, the sociology of planned change tells us of the formidable burden of rational persuasion it places on the individuals involved in designing, implementing and continuously alimenting the process. Is it at all possible? But is there any alternative way?

We come to a final and trivial, yet important reason for criticism: The reformers overestimated their ability to withstand stress and fatigue over a long period of time. To entertain the myriad of necessary activities implied by the center-periphery, bottom-up model the group was too small, its expertise too limited, the available resources too scanty (Edelstein, 1980). The twenty or so parttime workers were utterly overtaxed by having to function on all fronts and to provide expertise for too many simultaneous jobs. To mention some: Need analysis, developmental analysis, socio-structural and cultural analysis; subject matter expertise for various fields at various ages in various intellectual contexts; curriculum design, implementation and dissemination, textbook writing, editing, correcting and producing texts and lay-out, as well as A-V materials for students, for teachers, for the public; class-room design, project consultancy, master teaching, tryout experimentation, evaluation and

feed-back management to all those concerned with the curriculum enterprise (Helgadóttir, 1978). There is the need for continuous reassessent of the project to go along with the job. There is massive involvement in inservice training. There is participation in the education of teachers. There is the heavy burden of continuous pursuit of "academic" studies in order to accumulate developmental, instructional, organizational and substantive expertise as well as to impart it to others: to teachers, first of all, but to parents, administrators, politicians as well. And there is the day-to-day administration that goes with the inspectorate, with its fact-finding, public relations and advisory functions - a time-consuming and important task long served by the project.

When political change came, with a new and conservative administration, there was no base for protecting even the basic work process. When in the long nights of the history winter the press started its attacks on the group's integrity, the group requested that the Minister protect members against defamation, at least to announce her intent. That request received no answer except public renunciation. The answer came in power terms. We already know the parliamentary message. Administrative measures were to follow. Finally, the group resigned, saving, it felt, a last moment of dignity in a public statement. (13) During the public canonade, there never had been much opportunity for argument. The legitimacy of power prevailed against the frail legitimacy of rational discourse that intellectuals prefer to appeal to. Perhaps it is the greatest weakness of the reform project as a social construction: to trust the power of reason to balance the reasons of power.

It is ironic that, even in the eyes of the reformers, the reasons to critique the project are not entirely false. We know today that developmental didactics,

while necessary, is not sufficient. There must be a place besides induction, inquiry and discovery for the acquisition of "facts". We have to draw necessary inferences from the increasing weaknesses in basic knowledge in the schools. We know today that reforms have to attend to, not change alone, but to the true conditions of institutional stability and continuity as well. We know that educators have to attend to the institutional, the social and contextual conditions of learning and instruction no less than to the natural ones. And we know that a valid empirical theory of developmental instruction in socio-cultural context is not around the corner. Let us maintain the hope that our experience will ultimately contribute to such theory. Let us hope that reformers will be granted an opportunity to learn from painful experience, and that, in spite of its vicissitudes, progress is not impossible.

Footnotes

1) The opening attack was launched in the conservative daily Morgunbladid (13 November 1983) in an article by G. Magnússon, a historian-journalist working for the paper. The attack was continued in an editorial two days later. In January and February the author expanded his attack in a series of articles in the same newspaper. Morgunbladid has by far the biggest circulation of all Icelandic newspapers.

2) A diatribe by conservative MP Halldór Blöndal under the heading "Attack on Nationhood" was published in the newspaper DV, 18 November 1983.

3) Ex-MP (Social Democrat) Sighvatur Björgvinsson in the November 18 issue of DV, in an open letter to the (conservative) Minister of Education, while ridiculing the general didactic orientation of the project ("Snorri Sturluson or a society of baboons?"; Snorri, a 13th century poet, historian, and political hero, is a national figure) insinuates that more serious matters are involved: "Don't you see a submissive and hesitant secondary school teacher in Latvia respond to a similar question about his stance towards the most recent positions of the educational authorities in Moscow regarding a curriculum in Latvian history that is compatible with 'recent theories in psychology' and capable of helping Latvian adolescents to 'correctly' define 'present problems'". Three recurrent themes emerge in this and many subsequent contributions to the controversy: First, a general attack on the structure and orientation of an inductive and developmentally oriented curriculum that operates through comparison and contrast. The disparaging references to the baboon unit (a small unit for 10-year olds) recall the fundamentalist political attacks on Bruner's "Man: A course of study". Second, the outcry over neglect of, or attack on, nationhood, sometimes equating the alleged abolition of national history with the abolition of the mother tongue, presumably next on the reform agenda (e.g. the editorial of Morgunbladid, November 15, quoted above, and G. Finnbogason, in Morgunbladid, December 18, 1983). Third, the allegation of political subversion and leftist leanings of the Social Science Curriculum itself, the project members or, by implication, the whole R&D department of the Ministry of Education.

4) November 22, 1983, and February 9, 14, and 16, 1984; see Althingistídindi (parliamentary transcripts), pp. 2739-47, 2820-32, 2903-31.

5) Arnór Hannibalsson, Um sögu og menntastefnu (On history and educational policy), Morgunbladid, December 7, 1983; similarly, in a TV debate on history teaching in the schools, February 17, 1984. - One of the more curious features of the controversy is the contradictory accusations, frequently accepted by the same critics, of excessive attention to attitudes at the expense of facts and of insufficient indoctrination for patriotism. See the analysis by Karlsson (1984) and below, note 11.

6) It should be added here that there had been special praise for the Icelandic Government from the United Nation's Standing Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The committee, i.a. "congratulated the Government of Iceland on its educational programmes for the treatment of racial discrimination and for the propagation of United Nations activities, particularly programmes prepared for the compulsory educational system. It was stated that the educational measures described in the report were remarkably progressive and might well serve as a model to other States party to the Convention. In this connexion, members of the committee expressed the wish to receive school

curricula of relevance to article 7, as well as further information on the perspective from which developing countries were studied, on source material used for teaching about developing countries and how such material was prepared..." (para. 113).
The "educational measures" mentioned refer to SSCP's general strategy of inquiry about and empathy with different human groups and societies, with a special focus, in the upper grades, on understanding Third World problems and North-South tensions. See UN General Assembly, Official Records: Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 18 (A/35/18). United Nations: New York 1980, pp. 32-33; further the summary record released under CERD/C/SR. 461, p. 44 ff.; the report submitted by the Icelandic Government was released on January 8, 1980, with the identification CERD/C/66 Add. 7.

7) "The History of Iceland, History as well as Geography, must be independent subjects in the school system. They need to get more time and serious attention instead of the bungling and playing of social studies. We must free ourselves from the yoke of Piaget" (Editorial, DV 23, February 1984). The formula is first found in one of Magnússon's articles in Morgunbladid (February 11, 1984; see notes 1 and 9).

8) "... Earlier this year ... a considerable debate took place on history teaching in the schools. It is safe to affirm that this debate closed with widespread consensus that Icelandic schools should foster instruction about basic elements in the history of the nation but avoid the diversion of pupils' attention through 'integration' and deliberations about social problems"; Edi?rial, Morgunbladid, December 29, 1984.

9) Before the nature and scope of the attack became clear, the inspector of Social Studies, E. Kristjánsdóttir, published a response to the original article of November 13 (see note 1) attempting to correct its misrepresentations of the Social Science Curriculum and specifically that Icelandic history was being eliminated from the elementary school curriculum (Morgunbladid, November 24, 1983). And after the nature and scope of the attack had become clear, and evidence showed that the Minister of Education was not willing to publicly defend her subordinates against allegations of subversion, the present author published a response to the critics containing an overview over the history of the project and its continued effort at public information (Morgunbladid, February 8, 1984). L. Guttormsson, member of the project and lecturer in History at the College of Education, discussed the main theoretical and educational policy issues involved in three major articles published by the socialist opposition paper Þjódviljinn on December 18, 1983, and January 15 and 21, 1984. G. Magnússon, in the article series mentioned in note 1 (Morgunbladid, 28 January, 11 and 18 February, 1984) then proceeded to settle accounts with Social Studies, Piaget and "the new class of education experts and 'radical schoolmen'" whose "rebellion against Icelandic history" is due to either ignorance and lack of discernment, or to an antinational, internationalist and collectivist ideology. Magnússon's articles represent the most refined treatment of the three major themes mentioned earlier (note 3).

10) Minister Ragnhildur Helgadóttir, in a parliamentary speech, November 22, 1983. "Let me note that I believe that knowledge objectives should have priority. I believe the goal of instruction is to foster independent thinking in the students, based on solid knowledge, knowledge of facts. I believe that attitude instruction must not push back instruction of facts. This is capital. I agree with the honorable inquirer that facts, historical as well as other facts, continue to be facts even as society changes" (author's translation;

parliamentary transcripts, p. 999). Similarly, and more extensively, in the TV debate of February 17, 1984 (see above, note 5). The recurrent reproach of "attitude instruction" (indoctrination) appears to stem from misreading the original commission report on Social Studies (1971) that in the wake of Bloom's Taxonomy touched on the affective domain and affective objectives of teaching in the context of Social Studies. Among objectives are empathy, interest, and motivation.

11) As mentioned earlier, Magnússon published a series of articles to substantiate his claims. Yet his criticism practically ignored all recent developments of the historian's craft beyond even history, referring to traditional event history as the sole basis for national history. And history beyond national history, i.e. world history or universal history, was barely mentioned in this debate about the place of history and social science in the schools. Incidentally, in the whole controversy an editorial in the newspaper DV (21 February 1984) seems to be the only example of a reasoned historiographic position besides Magnússon's plea for event history. But in contradistinction to Magnússon, the editorialist explicitly endorses historicism, "the value-free neutrality of scientism", and consequently opposes any patriotic indoctrination function of history as a school subject. - In fact, as far back as 1974, SSCP, together with historians at the University of Iceland, had convened a conference to engage in systematic discussion about "history and social science". Due to their own interest in a broader, more structural conceptualization of the historical process and their disaffection with teaching event history, most historians who attended the conference came out in support of the project's orientation. Similarly, a conference of history teachers in the Teachers Center of the Educational Media Institute in late 1984 demonstrated full agreement between the substantive and didactic orientations of history teachers at the secondary school level and those of the Social Science Curriculum Project.

12) Motion proposed to Parliament in plenary session by members of three parties, February 9, 1984. "Parliament votes to request that Government provide for an increase in instruction about Icelandic history in the primary schools and that history (instruction) meet the objective not only to gain knowledge and understanding of the nation's history but faith in the land and the will to conserve the civilization that has developed here throughout centuries" (author's translation). This motion, triggered by the press campaign of the preceding months, started the parliamentary debate mentioned earlier (see note 4).

13) The letter of resignation to the Minister of Education, dated 22 June 1984, recapitulated the major procedural issues at stake. It triggered a forceful statement of the teachers unions in favor of SSCP, the curriculum reform, and the activity of the Ministry's R&D department.

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A P P E N D I X

THE PRESENTATION OF A UNIT

AND

EXAMPLES FROM GRADES TWO & FOUR

THE PRESENTATION OF A UNIT

I TEACHER HANDBOOK

PART A REASONS FOR SELECTING THE TOPIC

DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES & CONSTRAINTS

OVERVIEW AND TASK STRUCTURE * **

KEY CONCEPTS, MAIN IDEAS & ORGANIZING IDEAS *

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & TEACHING AIDS

REFERENCE MATERIAL

TABLE OF OBJECTIVES *

PART B GUIDE THROUGH CURRICULUM UNIT
(TASK ORIENTED STRATEGIES OF DEVELOPMENTAL INSTRUCTION)

II STUDENT TEXT BOOK

III SUPPLEMENTARY TASKS & INFORMATION MATERIALS
(FOR SUPPORT AND DIFFERENTIATION)
SLIDES, TAPES, PICTURES

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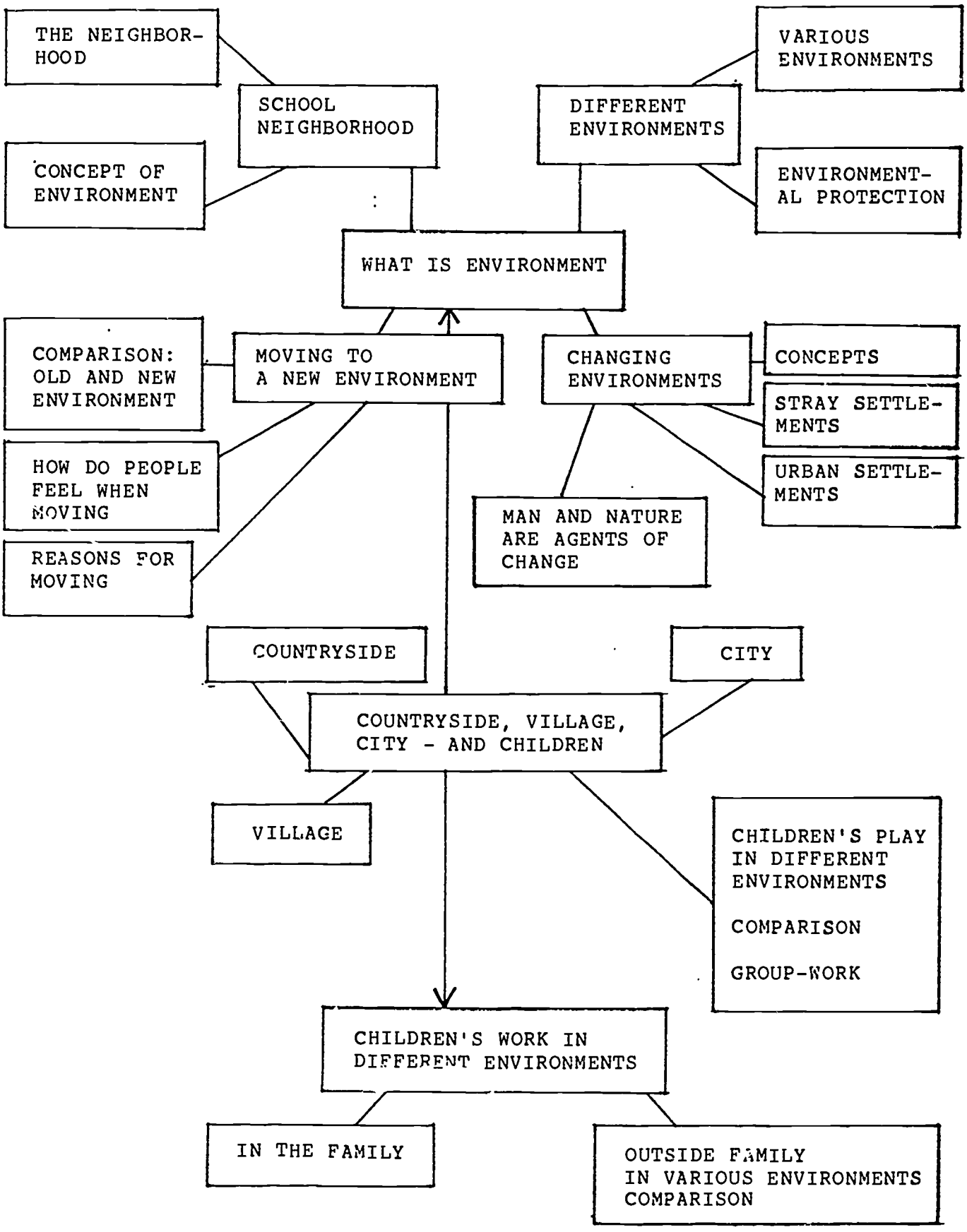
* Examples from grade Two (8 year olds) on pp 2-4

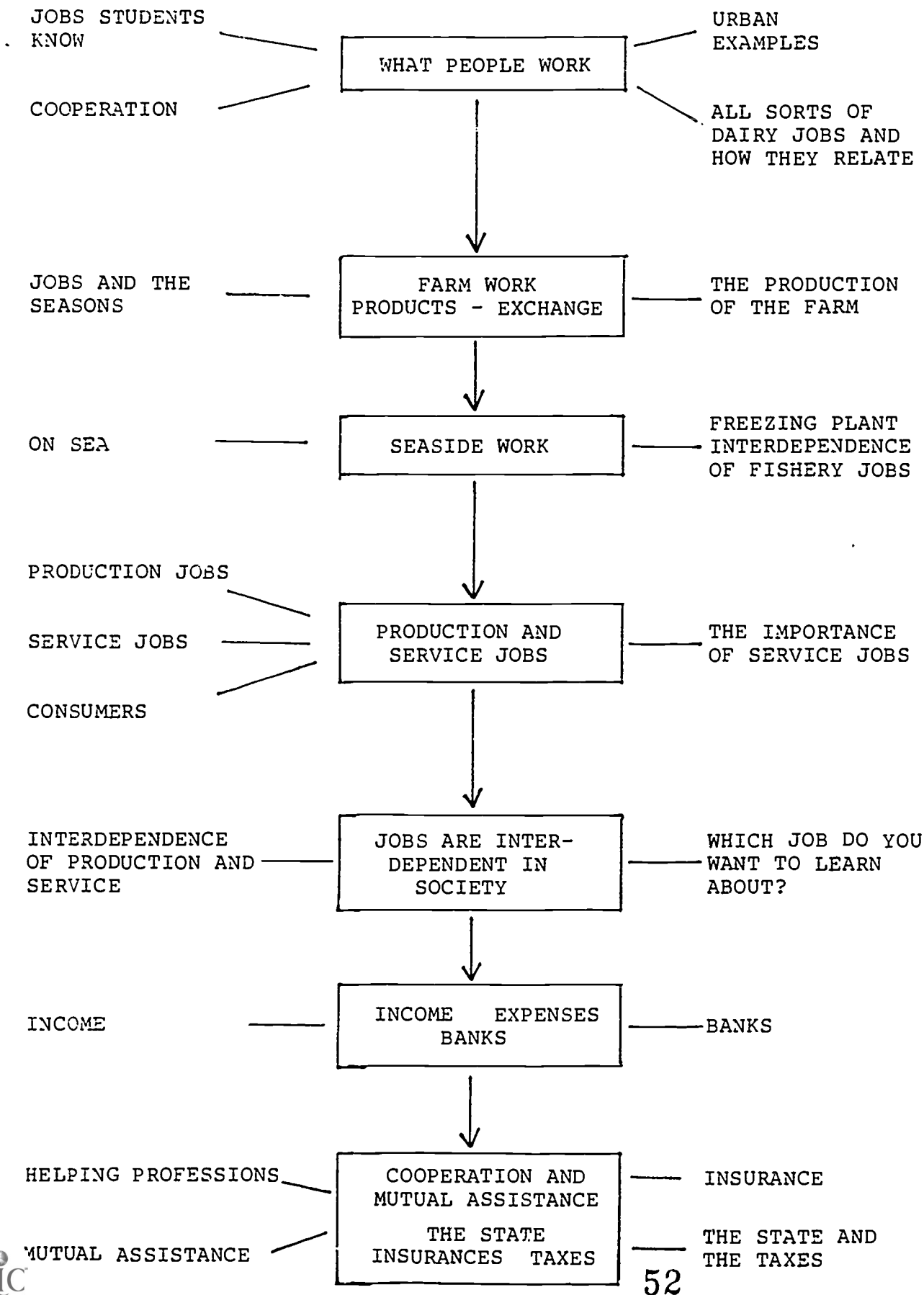
** Examples from grade Four (10 year olds) on pp 10-12

TASK STRUCTURE
(EXAMPLE FROM GRADE TWO)



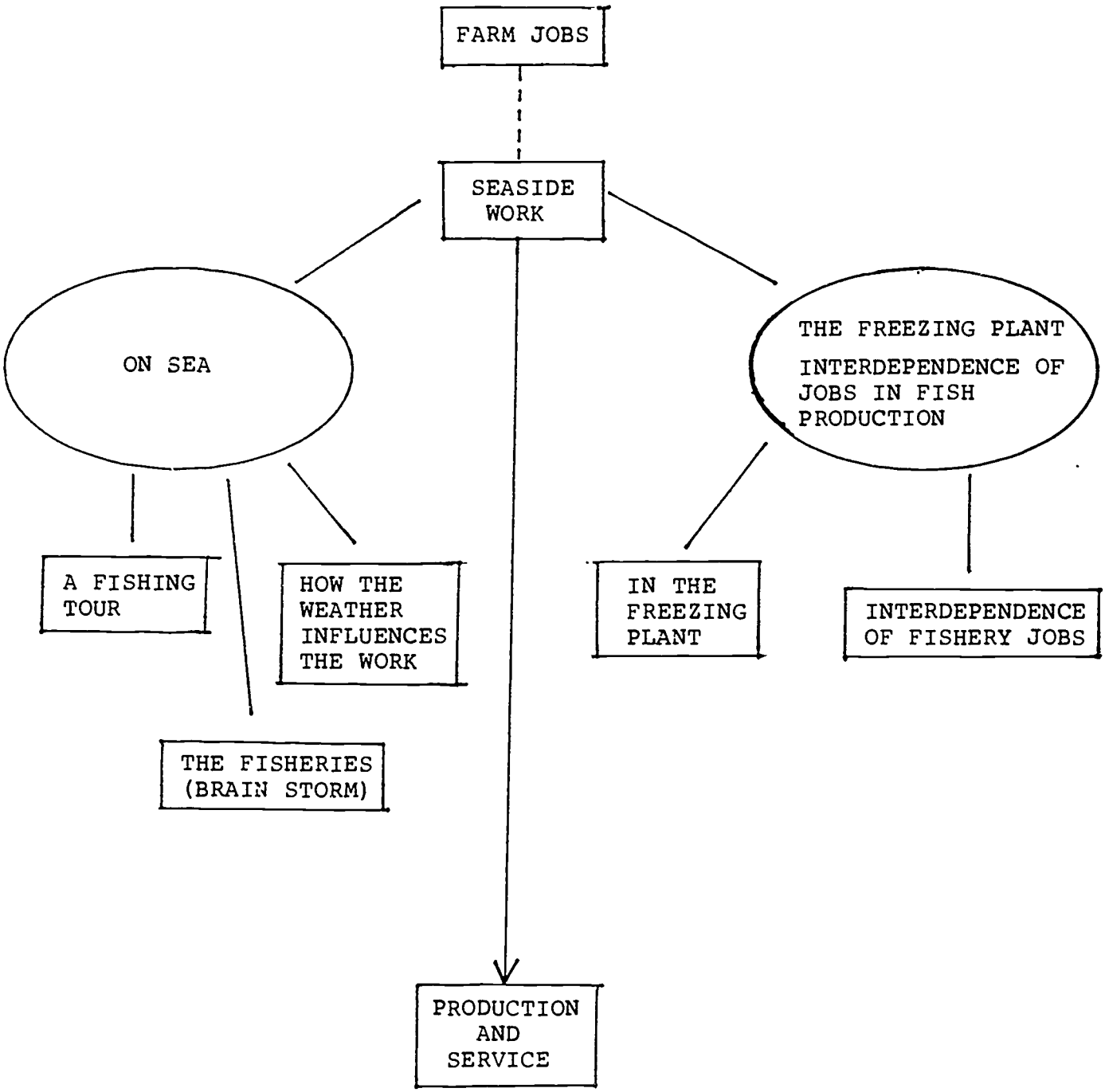
TASK STRUCTURE

EXAMPLE FROM GRADE TWO



TASK STRUCTURE (DETAIL)

EXAMPLE FROM GRADE TWO



KEY CONCEPTS:

ENVIRONMENT

VARIABILITY/DIFFERENCE

NEEDS

SOCIAL INTERACTION/COOPERATION

INTERDEPENDENCE/RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE

(WORK)ROLE/POSITION/NORM

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

VALUES

TRADITION

CAUSALITY

ORGANIZATION OF TASKS

(EXAMPLE FROM GRADE TWO)

MAIN IDEA:

- ENVIRONMENTS DIFFER
- CHILDREN'S GAMES DIFFER ACCORDINGLY AND OFTEN MIRROR WORK ROLES OF ADULTS

ORGANIZING IDEAS:

- CHILDREN'S GAMES DIFFER
- CHILDREN REACT DIFFERENTLY TO CONFLICT IN GAMES
- ENVIRONMENTS CAN BE CLASSIFIED WITH REGARD TO SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG THEM
- PEOPLE MOVE FOR VARIOUS REASONS
- ENVIRONMENTS CHANGE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MAN AND NATURE
- PEOPLE LIVE IN A VARIETY OF ENVIRONMENTS
- DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS PROVIDE DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY AND WORK
- DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS INFLUENCE CHILDREN'S WORK

OBJECTIVES:

KNOWLEDGE &

UNDERSTANDING: STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. UNDERSTAND CONCEPT
2. KNOW MAIN FEATURES OF ENVIRONMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE, VILLAGE, CITY
3. RECOGNIZE GAMES FROM VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS (COUNTRY, VILLAGE, CITY)
4. UNDERSTAND IN WHAT WAY ENVIRONMENTS CAN BE SIMILAR/DISSIMILAR
5. UNDERSTAND THAT ENVIRONMENTS INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S LIVES AND PEOPLE INFLUENCE ENVIRONMENTS
6. FORMULATE HYPOTHESES
7. MAKE COMPARISONS
8. CLASSIFY
9. IDENTIFY CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES
10. FORMULATE INFERENCE (GENERALIZATION)

OBJECTIVES:

SKILLS: STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. DRAW INFORMATION FROM PICTURES
2. LISTEN TO STORIES AND DEMONSTRATE COMPREHENSION THROUGH PLAY, PICTURES, AND WORDS
3. SEARCH FOR INFORMATION IN NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS, AND PICTURE MATERIALS
4. DERIVE INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS, SITE VISITS
5. USE PICTURES AND NARRATIVES FOR COMPARISON
6. NARRATE EXPERIENCE
7. LISTEN, ASK QUESTIONS, COMMUNICATE
8. EXPRESS INTENTIONS/FEELINGS/INFORMATION THROUGH PLAY, AND ART WORK
9. COOPERATE WITH OTHERS

OBJECTIVES:

ATTITUDES: STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE/READY TO:

1. TAKE THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO LIVE IN A DISSIMILAR ENVIRONMENT
2. ACCEPT (UNDERSTAND) THAT OTHERS HAVE FEELINGS AND IDEAS OF THEIR OWN
3. ENJOY OBSERVING PEOPLE AND THEIR WAYS OF LIFE
4. BE CONSIDERATE TO OTHERS IN RELATIONSHIPS
5. DEVELOP POSITIVE ATTITUDES TO COOPERATION
   E.G. IN STRONG POSITION AVOID DOMINATING OTHERS
   IN WEAK POSITION AVOID SURRENDER

FOURTH GRADE: OVERVIEW

MAN IN NATURE AND SOCIETY

ENVIRONMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND CHANGE	CONTENT	FORMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION
	I INTERACTIONS	
SKILLS NEEDED TO MASTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS	• WOLF CHILDREN • DIFFERENT PEOPLE - DIFFERENT HABITS • WHY RULES • AMONG MEN AND ANIMALS	PATTERNS OF INTERACTION
	II AMONG MEN & ANIMALS	
SKILLS NEEDED TO MASTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS	THE BEGINNINGS OF MAN BABOONS NATURE PEOPLE • THE TASADAY IN THE RAIN FORESTS • THE BUSHMEN IN KALAHARI DESERT • THE EIPO ON NEW GUINEA MOUNTAINS SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: KAMAJURA IN BRAZIL PYGMEES IN ZAIRE STONE AGE HUNTERS IN NORWAY	HUMAN AND ANIMAL SOCIETIES
	III THE SETTLEMENT OF ICELAND	
SOCIAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED TO MASTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS	THE EARLY SETTLEMENT * THE VIKINGS THE SETTLEMENT GAME (A SIMULATION GAME)	DIVISION OF LABOR COOPERATION INSTITUTION BUILDING

* DETAILS ON FOLLOWING PAGES

SUPPLEMENTARY UNITS
SLIDES AND TAPES
TEACHER HANDBOOKS FOR EVERY UNIT

THE STRUCTURE OF A UNIT

(EXAMPLE FROM GRADE FOUR)

THE BEGINNINGS OF MAN

THE EARLIEST MEN

MEN AND ANIMALS: DIFFERENCES?

AUSTRALOPITHECUS: MAN OR ANIMAL

THE ENVIRONMENT OF EARLY MAN

MAN AND THE FIRE

DAILY LIFE IN THE STONE AGE

STONE AGE DOCUMENTS

MEET STEN

THE UPRIGHT MAN

NEANDERTAL MAN

HOMO SAPIENS

THE STRUCTURE OF A UNIT

(EXAMPLE FROM GRADE FOUR)

THE EARLY SETTLEMENT